



South Fylde: Why Trams Make Sense

Why South Fylde presents a strong case for tramway extension, and the need to agree a strategy.

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Fylde Coast Light Rail Conference 2020



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Introduction

Introduction to South Fylde

- Covers Lytham, St Anne's, and south Blackpool
- Fylde Coast economies very integrated
- Split between two authorities
- Hourly rail service on line from Blackpool South to Kirkham (community rail supported)
- Two roads between Blackpool and Lytham/St Anne's
- Bus services with recent investment
- What are the problems?

Problems With South Fylde Transport

Road

- Only two main roads from Blackpool
- Congestion at peak times
- Diesel/petrol

Rail

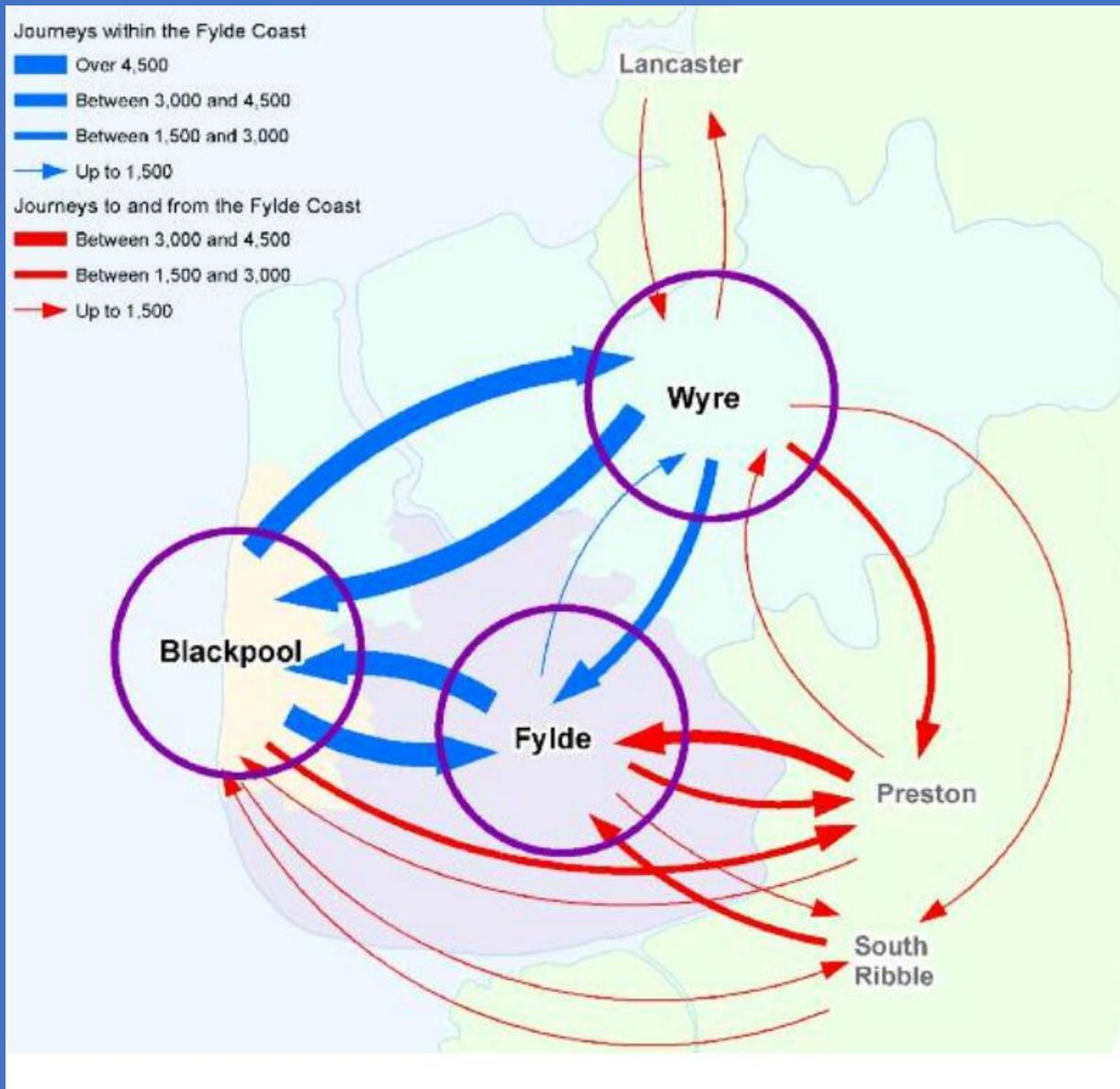
- Hourly service
- Does not reach key local areas
- Inaccessible to many residents
- Diesel

Bus

- Stuck in traffic
- Low capacity
- Long meandering routes
- Diesel

Tram

- Excellent service but...
- Does not reach South Fylde
- Starr Gate not a good interchange



Where are People Travelling?

- More journeys within Fylde Coast
- Fylde-Blackpool corridor important
- Outside links very key, but...
- Local investment benefits all parties
- But what's the solution?

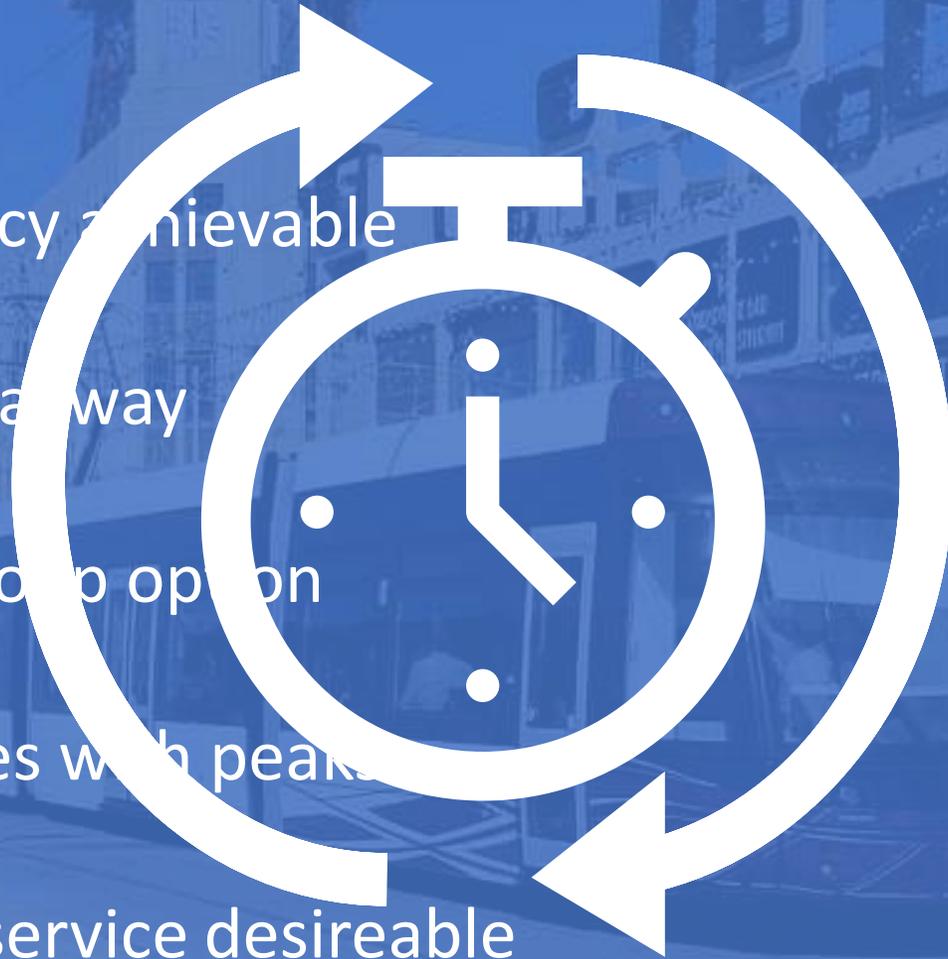
From Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan, based on Census data.

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Why Link Trams to South
Fylde?

Frequency

- 10-15 min frequency achievable
- 4-6 times current railway
- 2-3 times passing loop option
- High capacity, copes with peaks
- Frequency makes service desirable



Reliability

Destination	Scheduled	Expected
Blackpool South	09:00	Cancelled
Colne	09:30	Delayed
Blackpool South	10:00	10:12
Preston	10:30	10:47
Blackpool South	11:00	11:10
Colne	11:30	On time

- Blackpool Tramway has good reliability
- Not affected by traffic like buses

Accessibility

- Trains and buses need ramps/humps for accessibility

- Trains notorious hence 'mind the gap'

- Light rail has level boarding for wheelchairs, disabled, buggies etc



Connectivity

- SFL does not reach town centre, Promenade etc
Blackpool North Station
- Buses take long routes, stuck in traffic
Town Centre
- Light rail to South Fylde would link up:
Pleasure Beach
Squires Gate/Enterprise Zone
 - Blackpool Town Centre
 - Key Promenade **St Anne's** and attractions
 - Five coastal towns
 - Enterprise Zone **Ansdell**
 - Home to **Lytham** businesses
 - And much more!
- First step: Starr Gate Interchange?

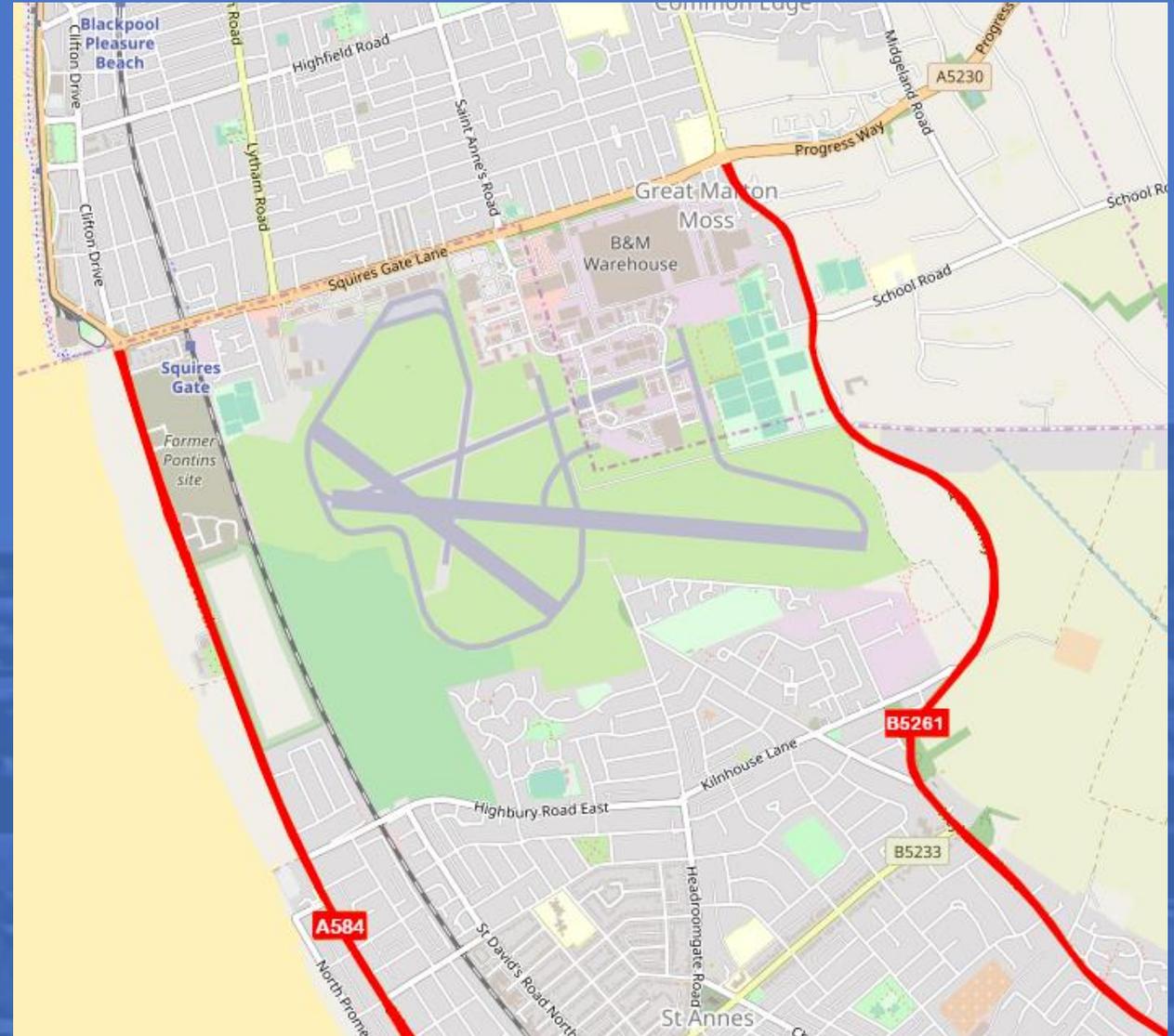
Catchment Area

- Railway has big gaps between stations
- Hundreds of homes and businesses
- Puts people off using service – may as well not be there, reliance on cars
- Trams would fill gaps
- More passengers, not less!



Congestion

- Only two roads between Blackpool & South Fylde
- Congestion at peak times
- Trams get people out of cars
- Fast, frequent high capacity light rail link would relieve issue
- P&R would help further
- Benefits those not using service!



Environment

- Local buses and trains use diesel
- No plans to electrify SFL
- Cars will take some time to convert over
- Trams already electric!
- Can easily adapt to renewable power

Satisfaction

- Blackpool Tramway has 97% satisfaction, one of highest in UK!
- Railway and buses at much lower levels.
- People losing trust with railways in recent years
- Buses more difficult to be satisfactory- external factors

Economy

A blue-tinted photograph of a tram at a station platform. The tram is on the right side of the frame, moving towards the viewer. On the left, a group of people is waiting on the platform. The background shows a building and utility poles. The overall scene is a public transit station.

- Light rail leads to less car reliance
- More footfall in key areas
- Better for business!
- Would encourage tourist pools of Blackpool, St Anne's and Lytham to travel between them
- Light rail creates direct & indirect local jobs!

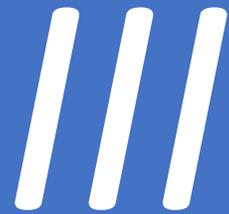
Next Gen Broadband?

- 'Full Fibre' cables installed under tramway in 2011/12
- Allows for next gen high speed internet
- Only now being activated
- Being extended to Enterprise Zones...
- But not St Anne's and Lytham!
- Tramway to South Fylde could make this happen!

The Case is There!

- Blackpool Tramway carries over 5m passengers per year
- More than all local railway stations & ten times SFL usage
- Nationally one of fastest growing modes
- Being embraced worldwide
- No reason to think it wouldn't be here - the case is clear!





How Do We Do It?



Street or Reserved Track?

- Two ways to link trams southwards: Clifton Drive or SFL
- Clifton Drive good for tourism etc...
- BUT street tracks are:
 - More expensive
 - More disruptive
 - Have slower line speeds
- SFL only realistic option
- Cheaper, quicker, minimal road disruption



How to Link the Lines

(not so simple!)

1. Full conversion or curtailment
2. Lots of trains over the railway
3. Can level crossing for train and rail
4. Railway central route fully kept
5. May take longer to materialise
6. Realign the railway
 - Railway can be fully retained
 - More effective for phased approach
 - Only can be done from bridges
 - Possible road disruption

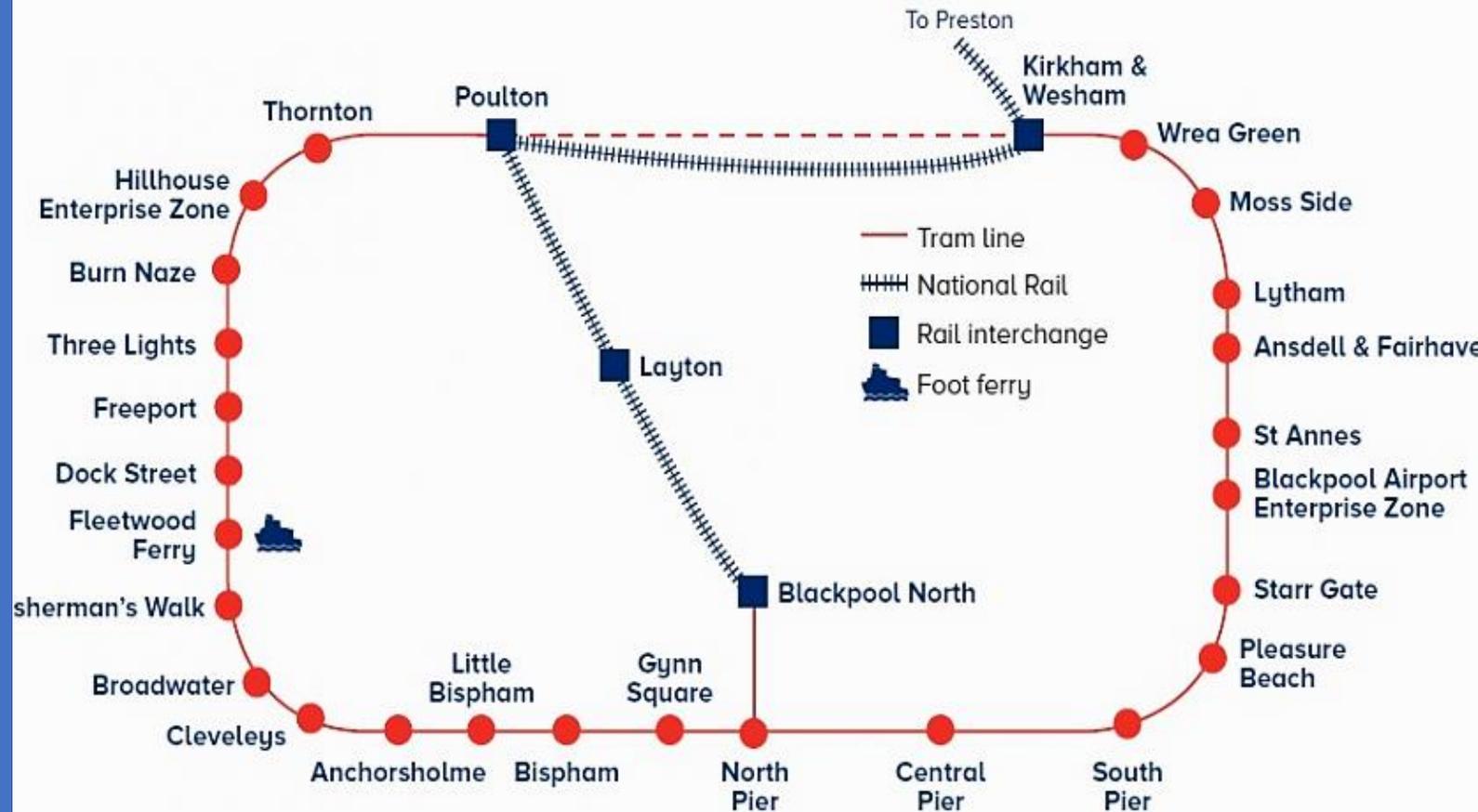
Where to Link the Lines

- Dozens of options and combinations...
- Have to narrow it down
- Further north the link, more expensive and more overlap
- Two frontrunners: Starr Gate and Burlington Rd West
- Homes make Starr Gate difficult, but possible to drop down from bridge
- Burlington Rd would need railway realignment or curtailment



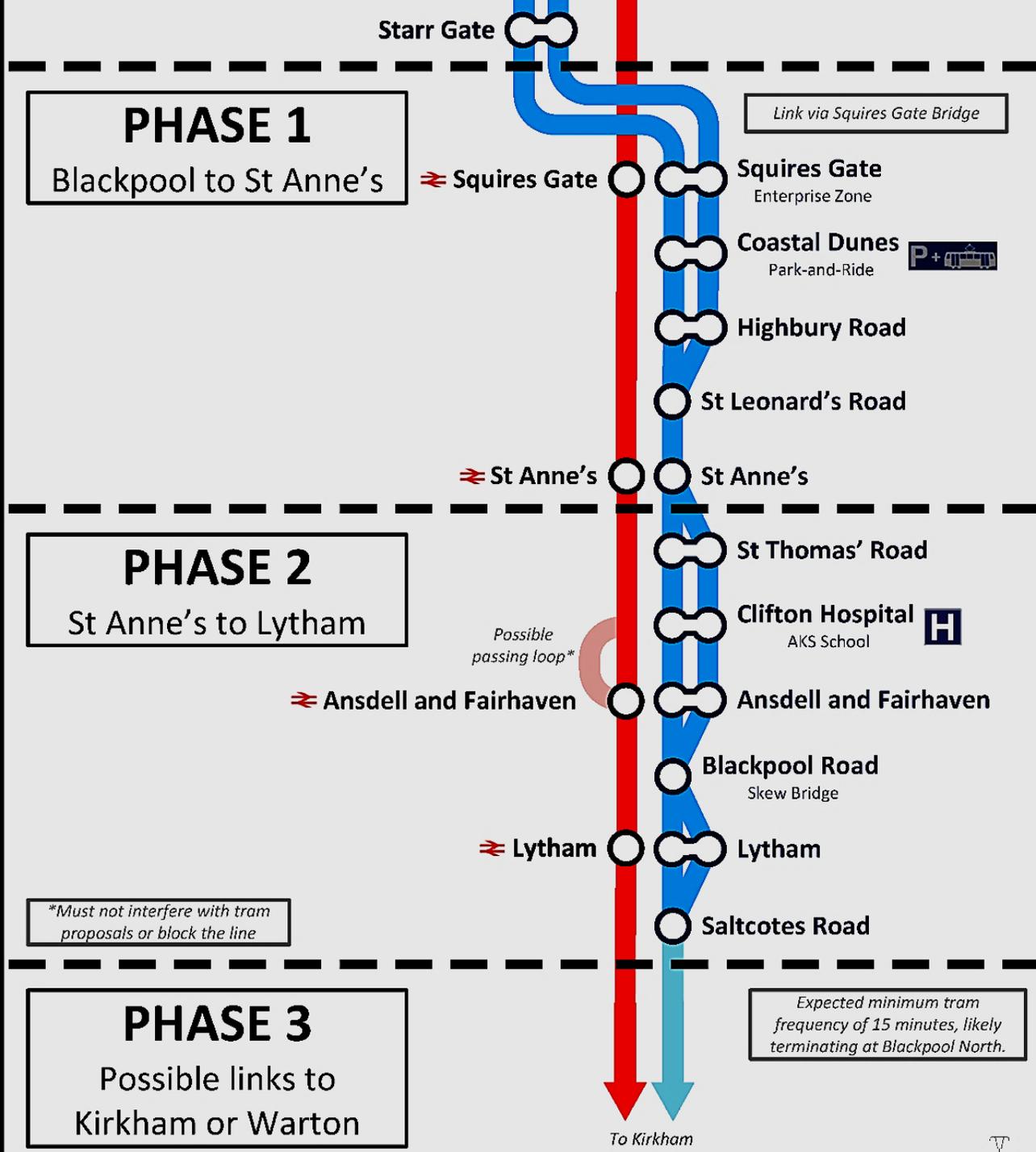
The Importance of Phasing

- Masterplans are great for overall strategy
- Unlikely that full “Tram Loop” would happen at once
- Phases should be identified
- Each phase should have independent BCR
- Most viable options done first
- Use examples of Metrolink and Birmingham plans



Trams to Lytham's Route Concept

- Extension from Starr Gate
- Tracks up Squires Gate bridge and ramp down to disused platform
- Running parallel with railway
- Split into realistic phases
- Stops to serve key areas
- Route to Blackpool North
- Only one of many options!



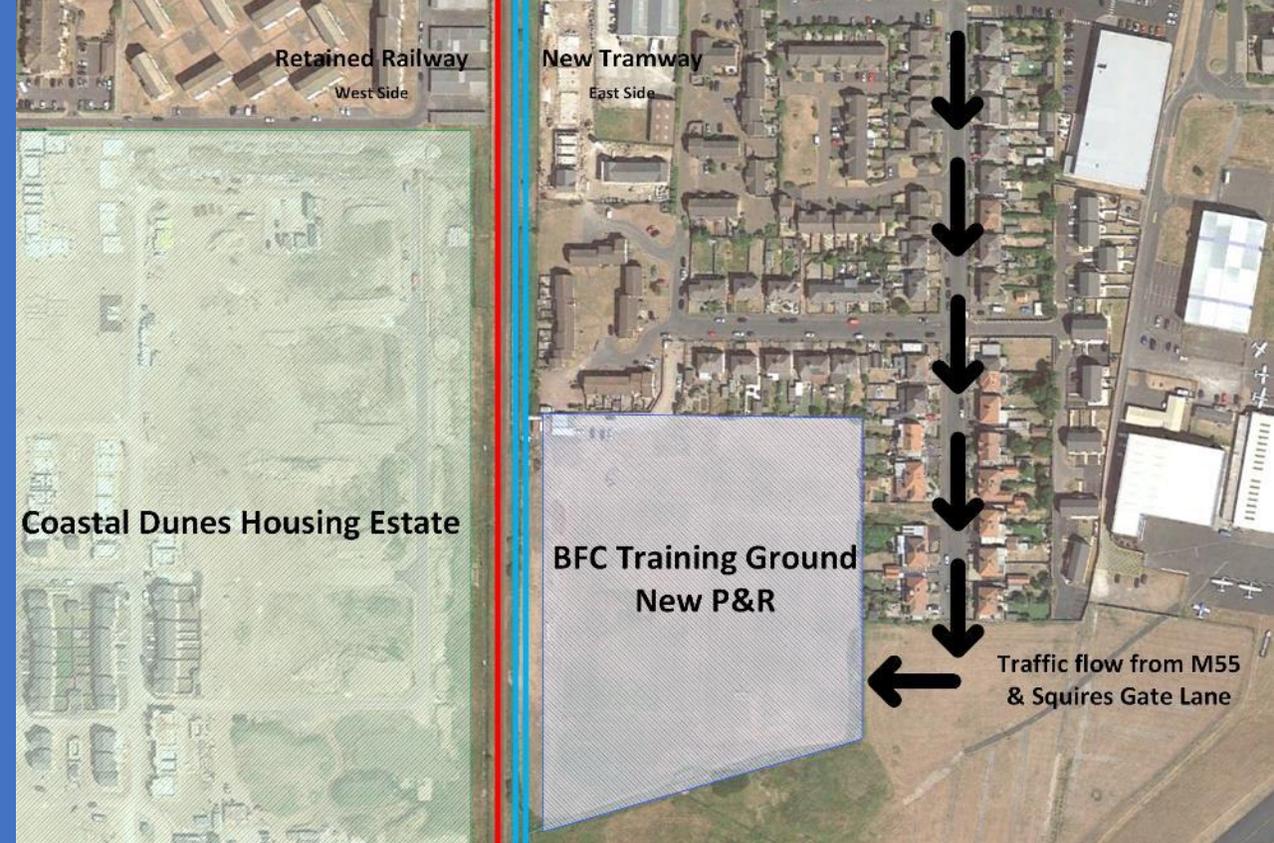


New and Existing Stops

- Tram stop at every rail station on SFL, creating interchanges
- New stops between stations, usually at bridges
- These new stops could serve:
 - New and existing housing estates
 - Town Centres and businesses
 - Clifton Hospital
 - Schools
 - Workplaces
 - And much more!

Park and Ride

- Blackpool only UK tramway without P&R
- This scheme could provide opportunity
- BFC training ground next to line- they planning to move
- Big site with access from SGL & M55
- Reduces congestion & relieves pressure for events:
 - Illuminations
 - Air Show
 - Lytham Festival



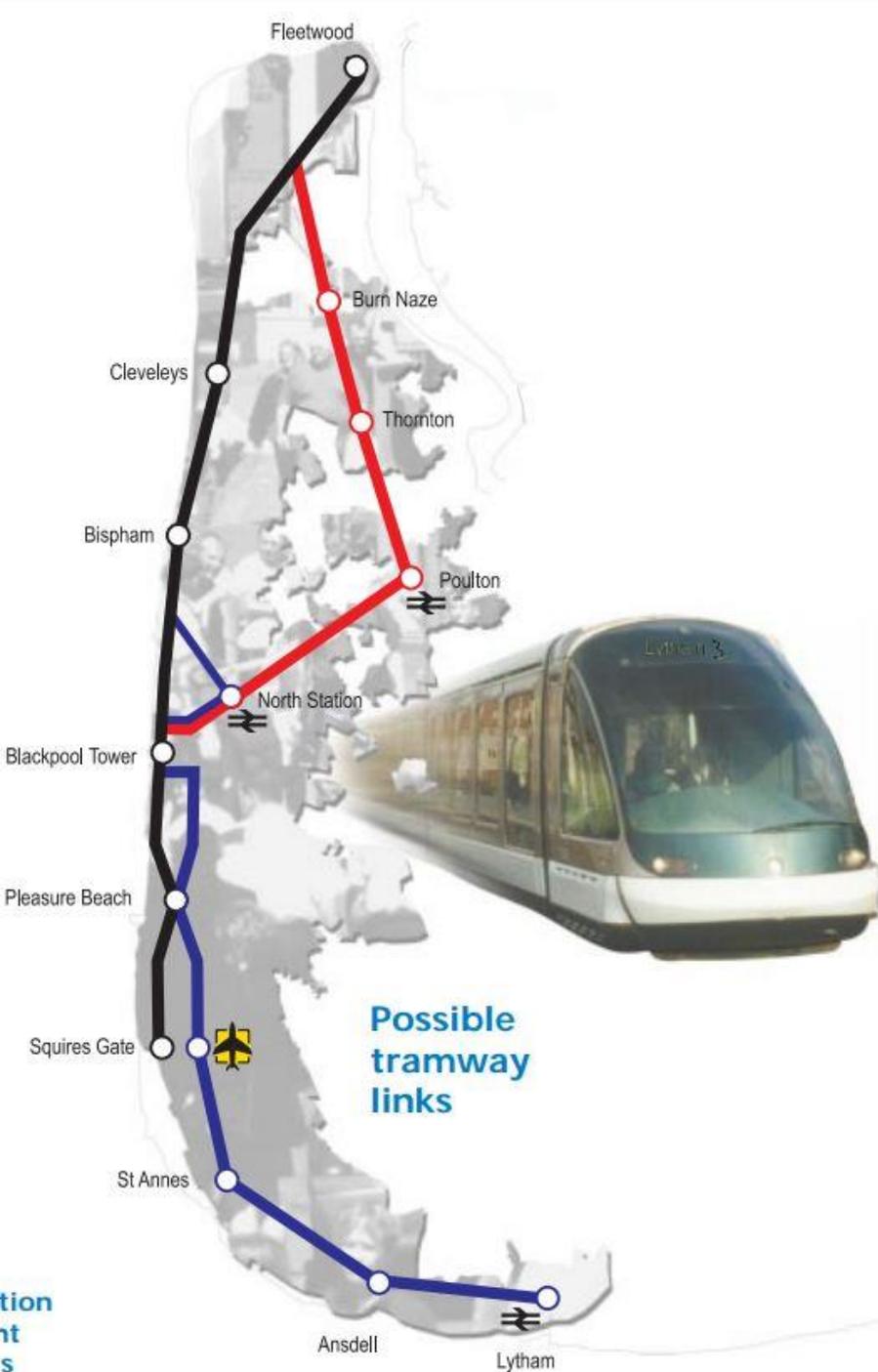
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The Next Steps

Proposed Feasibility Studies

- £2m FHSF tram loop bid, plus “Town Deal”
- Will look at all options if successful
- Everyone must back the bid! Councils, MPs, stakeholders etc
- Needs to consider all proposals carefully and...

Don't Repeat Mistakes!



- Early 2000s- failed Fylde tram network bid
 - Too ambitious?
- 2015- SINTROPHER/LCC/Jacobs studies
- Made many mistakes
 - Didn't consider tramway growth
 - No mention of phasing
 - Options not weighted properly
 - Community engagement
 - Report hidden away!
- Now outdated
 - Further tram growth
 - New housing, new EZ etc
 - Recent issues with railways
- New study must get it right!

The Passing Loop Problem

- Competing proposal: heavy rail passing loop
- Would increase train frequency to 30 mins
- Only solves one issue (partially). Light rail solves dozens
- Must not block trams under any circumstances
- Must not be seen as 'final solution'- trams cannot be kicked into long grass again!

Some Common Criticisms... And Answers!

The Community Voice

- Campaigners ever since original line closed
- Always at the forefront of transport discussion
- Huge support with public- petitions, polls etc
- TTL campaign evidence of this
- Appears in local documents
- Councils, MPs and others must listen, and seize chance to revolutionise local transport

TRAMS WOULD BE MORE

QUICK.

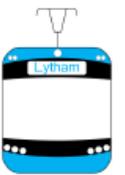
GREEN.

ACCESSIBLE.

RELIABLE.

THAN BUSES OR TRAINS BETWEEN
LYTHAM AND BLACKPOOL

SEARCH TRAMS TO LYTHAM



[change.org](https://www.change.org)

Conclusion

- Many problems with transport today
- Trams can solve many of them- already proven
- Lots of options to consider
- Passing loop not enough alone
- Future studies must get it right
- Decision makers must listen to community
- Let's build a transport network to be proud of!

Thanks for Listening!

Image Credits: Sam Flynn, Google Images, Google Maps, Wikipedia Commons, Geographer